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Better than a Ferrari?

THE CARS THAT GIVE THE PRANCING HORSE A RUN FOR ITS MONEY



911
vs DINO

928
vs MONDIAL

Ghibli
vs DAYTONA

Corvette
vs 328GTS

Mercedes
vs 456

Bizzarrini
vs 275GTB

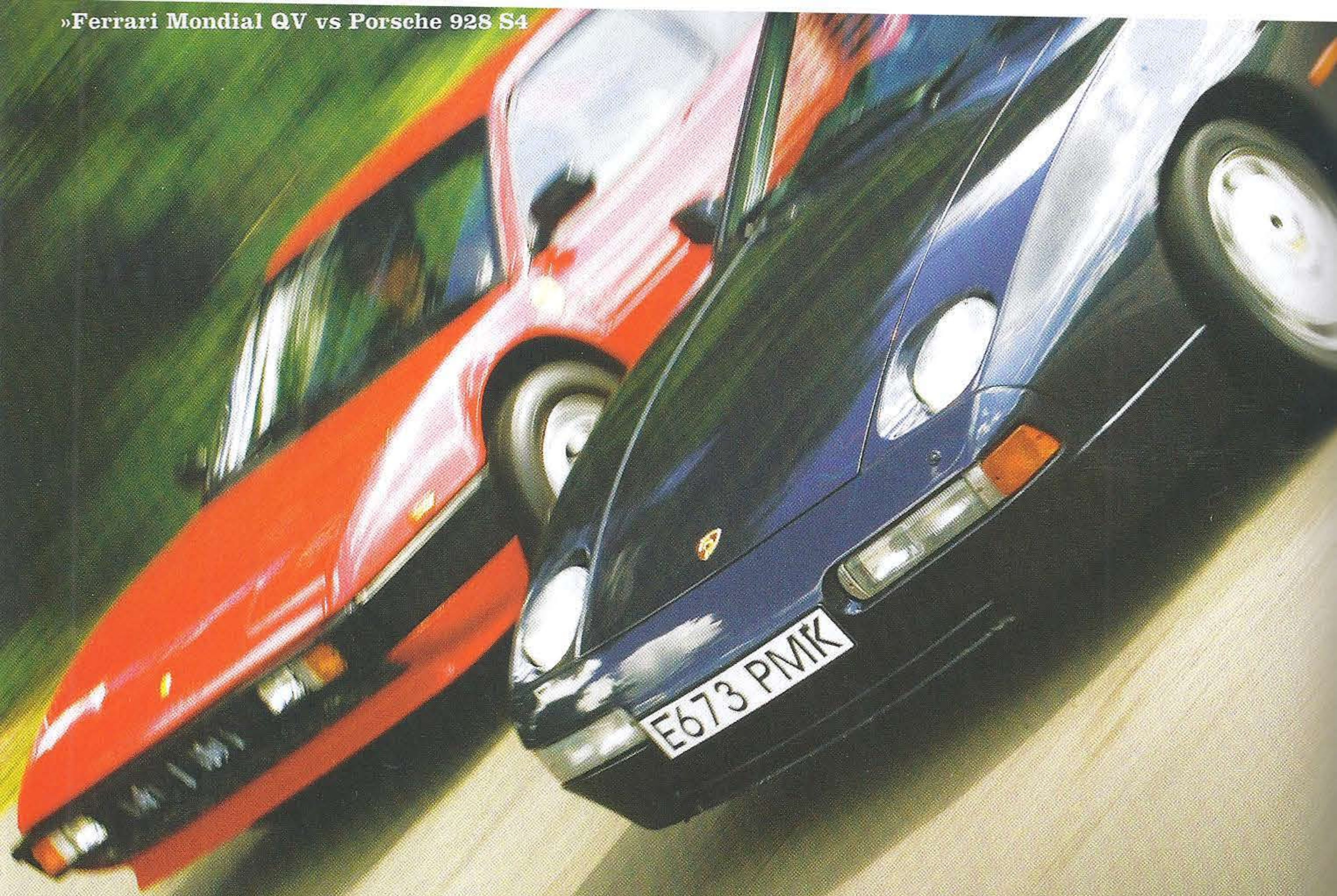
PLUS

- » AC Ace: historic racer returns after 40 years
- » How an Austin 7 survived Eastern deserts
- » Graham Hill v Jackie Stewart: unseen pictures
- » To Jamestown, Virginia, on a Triumph Tiger



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Going up?

It might look a bit pregnant, but the Mondial's old-style Ferrari charm captivates from the moment you twist the key. All the Ferrari clichés apply here, so let's recap: yes, the open-gate gearchange can be baulky, but it works better the faster and more positively you shift; yes, you avoid second until it's warmed up; yes, your feet are wickedly offset towards the centre due to the wheelarch intrusion.

But you don't buy a Ferrari of a certain age for its ergonomics: it's all about the mechanicals, and the three-litre four-valve V8 sings along contentedly like a sweetly tuned 'four' on its lowish gearing. Power delivery builds in pleasingly linear fashion, and you enjoy the physical and aural sensations from a grown-up seating position in a light and airy cabin which really, almost, does have room for four.

Wrestle it into a corner – no power steering here and this car doesn't need it – and it shows its age, limited grip highlighting its sensitivity to the throttle, basically understeering but with the dynamics shifting rapidly if you lift off. Yet the brakes pull up hard and square on a firm, confidence-inspiring pedal.

And on to the final cliché: on a used Mondial-period Ferrari the interior and fittings become tatty and begin to fall apart. But that's not the point. Older Ferraris come equipped with wonderful mechanicals and you get the body and fixtures for free. Question is, is it worth three rock-hard 928s?

The most important thing about 928s is that they work (bar sometimes a few minor electrics). You turn them on, stick



Ferrari Mondial

Mid-mounted all-alloy four-cam 2926cc V8, driving rear wheels. 214bhp @ 6600rpm. 181lb ft @ 4600rpm. Weight 1455kg. 0-60mph 9.4sec, top speed 142mph



Porsche 928 S4

Front-mounted all-alloy 4957cc four-cam V8, driving rear transaxle. 320bhp @ 6000rpm. 317lb ft @ 3000rpm. Weight 1990kg. 0-60mph 6.7sec, top speed 165mph

You'll buy either one for £5000, or double that for a mint – both Mondial and 928 have been at rock bottom for years. But should you? And do you go Latin or Teutonic?

Words: Paul Hardiman Photography: Matthew Howell

them in D, floor it and let the indestructible V8 bang off the rev limiter until you reach 170mph, or whatever.

They've been doing it since 1975, and you might still find a 30-year-old one in the classifieds: they were all galvanised and the big V8 can rack up enormous mileages.

Why an auto? Most are, and the massively gaitered self-shifter works better than the clunky manual; more in keeping with the 928's *Blake's Seven* interior too. There's masses of space in the front, but rear-seat passengers fare badly – there's as little legroom as in the smaller 911.

Now, they might have big bums but 928s handle; turn-in is good with the power-assisted steering and the back won't get out of shape unless you're really silly.

Issues? Make sure the air-con works (expensive to fix) but don't expect the same of the RDK tyre-pressure system fitted to some cars. Look out for coolant in the vee, oil in the sump shield or a trail of oil smoke, early GTSs being particularly afflicted. See 928.org.co.uk.

Better than a Ferrari? This fabulous package is available from £4500, so in bald terms and performance, inevitably. But it doesn't sing to you like the Mondial does.

• Thanks to Fiorano Cars for the 1982 Mondial QV, which is for sale at £13,995; call +44 (0)20 8838 0616 or see ww6.ukwebsites.net. The 1987 S4 is for sale with Alex Johnson on +44 (0)7973 953492 at £5995.